



East Norriton PCE Site Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

– Frequently Asked Questions –



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY - REGION 3

SEPTEMBER 7, 2005

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is connecting residences in the Rahway Avenue area of East Norriton, PA, to public water due to PCE-contamination detected in nearby groundwater and residential wells. Since EPA began work, we have received several questions about the project. The purpose of this fact sheet is to share these questions and answers with the community and to provide an update on our progress.

Q. When will I start getting public water service?

A. EPA is coordinating with East Norriton Township and Pennsylvania American Water (PAW). Residents should be receiving public water (sometimes called "city water") by late fall / early winter 2005.

Q. Who's responsible for the contamination?

A. We don't know yet. EPA is working with Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) to investigate possible sources of the PCE contamination. Part of the investigation involves conducting an extensive groundwater study, which could take between 1 and 3 years to complete.



Q. Are you going to fix my yard?

A. Yes. Once all curb-to-house hookups are installed, EPA will go back to each property that had work done, and restore the yard as close to its original condition as possible. This may include re-seeding and/or replacing pre-existing vegetation.



Q. Will I still get bottled water?

A. Yes. EPA will provide bottled water at no cost to residents until the main water line is extended, houses are hooked up, and public water is available inside the homes.

Q. How long will the project take?

A. Each house is different, so curb-to-house hookups vary in the amount of time each takes. One hookup could take about 2 to 5 hours. EPA is scheduled to provide hookups to about 61 homes. EPA's portion of the project (curb-to-house hookups) is estimated to be finished by mid-September. The total project (main water line extension and public water supplies going to each home) is estimated to be finished by late fall / early winter 2005.

The time frame depends on scheduling appointments with individual home owners, construction scheduling and weather conditions.



Q. How much is this going to cost me?

A. There will be no charge to residents for this project. EPA is providing the curb-to-house hookups and East Norriton Township is working in cooperation with PAW to provide the extension of the main water line.

Residents will be responsible for maintaining their plumbing, just as before (like fixing leaky faucets, pipes, etc....) and will start receiving a monthly water bill once the public water supply is available and wells are shut down. Residents can control utility bills by watching and conserving how much water they use in a month.



Q. Am I required to shut down my well and go on public water?

A. Yes. Due to the PCE contamination found in the area's groundwater, as a measure of public health and safety, East Norriton Township has passed an ordinance requiring the Rahway Avenue area residents to close off private wells and begin using public water supplies.

Q. Can I keep my well open for other, outdoor uses?

A. No. Continuing to pump groundwater up and into several wells may cause the contamination to spread. Closing the wells will also help ensure that new residents to the Rahway Avenue area will not unknowingly start using or drinking contaminated water.

Some wells in the area may be kept open and used as "monitoring wells" which means that EPA and PADEP will collect samples from these wells over time (most likely quarterly samples taken every three months). The monitoring wells will help in the investigation by tracking the contaminants back to the possible source(s).

A Brief History

In the fall of 2004, PCE was detected in drinking water wells at elevated levels. As part of an immediate response to address the contamination, EPA has been distributing bottled water, free of charge, to residents with potentially affected wells in the Rahway Avenue area of East Norriton Township. A public water line extension and hookups are being installed, and an investigation into the source of the contamination is underway.

EPA has set up an office trailer
on the corner of Bristol St. and Rahway Ave.

If you have additional questions,
feel free to stop by
between 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday.



Q. Why is this project necessary?

A. The switch from private well water to public water is due to the PCE contamination found in nearby groundwater and some residential wells. PCE (tetrachloroethylene, or also called "perc") is a chemical found in some grease cleaners, industrial solvents and dry cleaning processes. It is a suspected carcinogen and long-term exposure to elevated levels can cause potential health risks. For more information on related health concerns, visit the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) website at www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp18.html

EPA is working on this project as a team with:

- ▶ East Norriton Township
- ▶ Norristown Borough
- ▶ Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD)
- ▶ Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP)
- ▶ Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

For More Information, Contact...

- Trish Taylor, US EPA
Community Involvement Coordinator
(215) 814 - 5539
- Lynda Rebarchak, PADEP
Community Relations Coordinator
(484) 250-5820
- Rachel DeMarzio, MCHD
Water Quality Supervisor
(610) 278-5117, ext 6727
- Helmuth Baerwald
East Norriton Township
Township Manager
(610) 275 - 2800, ext 114
- Thomas O'Donnell
Norristown Fire Chief
Emergency Management Coordinator
(610) 270 - 0420

